MassDEP eNewsletter
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EnviroMatters

MassDEP's Clean Energy Results Program Makes Progress Recycling Organics for Fuel

The Massachusetts Clean Energy Results Program (CERP) is an innovative, first-of-its-kind new program that was launched in November 2011 by the Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) and the Department of Energy Resources (DOER). The program is designed to maximize the combined resources of both agencies to better advance the siting and successful implementation of renewable energy and energy efficiency projects. A key goal of CERP is to promote an increased capacity in the Commonwealth for anaerobic digestion (AD) - a process that breaks down food and other organic material to produce a renewable biogas (largely comprised of methane). This biogas is then combusted to generate electricity and heat. Just over a half-year from launch of this new program, the agencies are making great strides toward this goal.

An anaerobic digester in Rutland, Mass. Photo by Randy Jordan, owner of Jordan Dairy Farm.

Diverting commercial organic wastes (such as vegetable waste from farms, food processers, grocery stores, institutions, and restaurants) from the waste stream and converting them to a useful fuel has many significant benefits. Removal of these materials from the waste stream saves them taking up limited capacity in the state's landfills. In addition, because Massachusetts has some of the highest solid waste disposal rates in the country (ranging from $60-$90 a ton, nearly double the

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national average), recycling organic material for reuse can considerably off-set disposal costs for the businesses that generate these materials. Furthermore, producing renewable biogas from anaerobic digestion is a sustainable, renewable energy solution. Active capture and use of methane from the breakdown of organic material reduces emissions of greenhouse gases and diminishes our dependency on fossil fuel.

MassDEP is working with DOER, the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture, the Mass Clean Energy Council, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to ensure that, by 2020, the Commonwealth is generating 50 megawatts of electricity from this renewable source - up from the less than 10 megawatts being generated now. These partners also have a goal of diverting 350,000 tons per year of organic material from landfills and incinerators to anaerobic digestion and other organics-processing facilities; organic material represents more than 25 percent of the total amount of waste currently being thrown away in Massachusetts.

MassDEP and its partner agencies have identified specific steps to increase diversion of organic material for productive reuse via anaerobic digestion and other processing facilities. Those actions include: streamlining and clarifying regulatory requirements; increasing diversion of food waste at large businesses and institutions to ensure a supply of material for anaerobic digestion; and encouraging appropriate siting of more anaerobic digestion projects across the Commonwealth.

MassDEP is in the final stages of amending its solid waste regulations to facilitate significant expansion of the state's capacity to process and recycle source-separated organics and other recyclable materials. Concurrent amendments to regulations governing municipal wastewater treatment plants will allow those facilities to accept appropriate source-separated organics for AD processing, which will in turn boost their energy production and reduce their operating expenses. The agency has been working with stakeholders to address the thoughtful comments received on draft regulations earlier this year, and MassDEP's final AD regulations are expected to be published by the fall of 2012.

In addition, agencies have made great progress conducting a preliminary evaluation of sites on public lands that may be well-suited for new anaerobic digestion facilities. We have narrowed the sites to a manageable list of eight, and are meeting with the state Division of Capital Asset Management, agency heads, and host communities to talk about the feasibility for siting these demonstration projects.

Massachusetts has already made significant progress in diverting organics from the waste stream and has been a leader in working with commercial generators of organics on building an infrastructure for collection. Over the past decade, MassDEP has worked extensively with major supermarket chains in Massachusetts, and as a result more than 300 of the 600 supermarkets are diverting organics (produce, breads) from disposal for compost at nearby farms. MassDEP has also

worked with a number of other business sectors that generate significant quantities of food waste to help them establish diversion programs. Sectors with active diversion programs include hotels, colleges and universities, convention centers, hospitals, and large restaurants.

Given the importance of diverting organic materials away from landfills and into beneficial renewable energy, the Commonwealth will soon be proposing adding commercial organics to the other materials currently banned from landfills and incinerators.

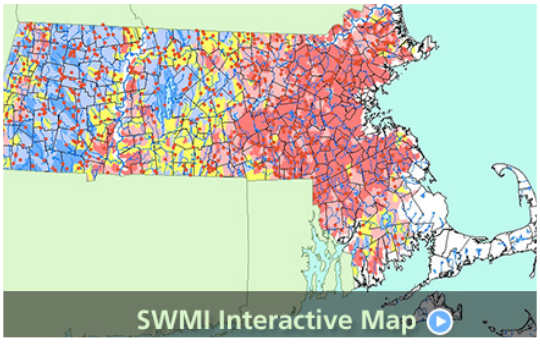
The Patrick-Murray Administration seeks to put all of these pieces together so that, before too long, all commercially-generated organic waste is diverted from disposal and processed through AD to harvest the renewable fuel source. In many European countries, large-scale anaerobic digestion of organic waste has proven successful in the creation of jobs, improving energy independence, stimulating economic growth, and being an important component of the renewable-energy strategy. Through the combined efforts of DOER, MassDEP, and other key stakeholders, Massachusetts is leading efforts to make this a reality in the Commonwealth.

For more information on the recycling of organic wastes, go to: http://www.mass.gov/dep/recycle/reduce/composti.htm.

MassDEP, Environmental Agencies Advance Sustainable Water Management Efforts

For many years, there has been an absence of clear, predictable, science-based standards to answer the question: How much water can be taken out of the ground before causing significant harm to our streams and rivers?

MassDEP has been working closely with the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA), the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), the Division of Fish and Game (DFG), and a number of important stakeholders, on the Sustainable Water Management Initiative (SWMI). This major undertaking is intended to balance the sometimes competing needs in the Commonwealth - water supply for human use and protection of fish habitat. To do this, the agencies have been working on developing predictable, science-based, and protective standards for high-quantity water withdrawals.



The SWMI Interactive Map application is available at: http://209.80.128.252/flexviewers/SWMI_Viewer/index.html

The underpinning for the standards was a USGS report that used extensive fish-sampling data and sophisticated modeling to demonstrate that as water is withdrawn in August, and the percentage of impervious area in a watershed increases, the abundance of sensitive fish populations decline. While some stakeholders challenged some of the findings, MassDEP is in the process of obtaining two independent peer reviews.

In the winter of 2012, the agencies released a draft framework for stakeholder review. This framework consists of a scientific categorization of 1,400 stream and river basins, criteria to ensure adequate streamflow, a revised formula to calculate safe yield, and concrete proposals to embody this work into regulations under the Water Management Act (WMA). EEA and its agencies received many thoughtful and useful comments, and are now reviewing those comments to inform the development of the final framework and proposed revisions to the WMA regulations.

In order to evaluate how the SWMI framework will play out in the real world, the draft framework is being applied in a handful of pilot communities, which are going through a "mock permitting" exercise. Through these public water supply system pilots in Amherst, Danvers-Middleton, Dedham-Westwood, and Shrewsbury, the SWMI team will be able to see potential costs of implementation and environmental benefits that could result from water management actions under the framework. DFG, with MassDEP funding assistance, is also supporting river restoration and monitoring in some of the pilot communities and evaluating the potential for the same in all of them.

The process of developing revised WMA regulations is proceeding on a parallel track. In this way, the pilot analyses will serve to inform and guide the development of those regulations. In addition, MassDEP and DCR have been improving data management to better assist with the permitting process.

The SWMI team expects to prepare and disseminate a final framework later in the summer of 2012, while the revised WMA regulations should be out for public comment by early 2013. For more details on SWMI, go to: http://www.mass.gov/dep/water/resources/swmi.htm.

Western Mass. Recycling Effort Gets 'Greener' with Installation of Solar Panels at Springfield MRF

Recycling in western Massachusetts became "greener" this spring when the state-owned Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) in Springfield began operating its new solar panel system and utilizing that renewable energy in the MRF's operations.

The Commonwealth utilized federal American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) funds and Clean Energy Renewable Bonds to install 616 roof-mounted solar panels, resulting in a 130-kilowatt photo-voltaic (PV) system that will supply up to 35 percent of the MRF's annual energy

usage. The new system reduces demand for electricity generated from fossil fuels, and also cuts back on greenhouse gas emissions.

Workers installing solar panels on the roof of the Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) in Springfield

The new PV system installation was celebrated in May at a ceremony featuring MassDEP Commissioner Ken Kimmell, Department of Energy Resources (DOER) Commissioner Mark Sylvia, officials from the Division of Capital Asset Management, and the Springfield MRF Advisory Board.

"The Springfield MRF greatly benefits the environment and the economy for communities in western Massachusetts," said Commissioner Kimmell at the ceremony. "The new solar panels are the next step in the 'greening' of the recycling services offered here, and the alternative energy generated will help to reduce emissions from fossil fuel use."

It was pointed out at the ceremony that the recycling and reuse industry in Massachusetts employs nearly 14,000 people, with annual receipts topping $3 billion a year.

The solar panels were manufactured in Massachusetts by Evergreen Solar, and the 28 solar system inverters were manufactured by Solectria Renewables in Lawrence. Ostrow Electric of Worcester was the installation contractor.

DOER Commissioner Sylvia said the MRF solar project is one of many funded by DOER with federal ARRA funds. "Together, these clean energy installations at 24 state facilities represent almost four megawatts of solar electricity, enough to power 633 homes for a year," he said. The Commissioner added that these solar projects will lower state energy bills by more than $500,000 annually, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by more than 1,900 metric tons.

The Springfield MRF was built in 1989, and is operated by Waste Management Recycle America (WMRA) under a contract with MassDEP, which owns the facility.

At the ceremony, Commissioner Kimmell also announced that that the WMRA operating contract has been extended until June 30, 2020. The extension provides that a single-stream recycling option will be offered to those MRF communities that adopt the program. Approximately 700,000 tons of waste will be diverted from area landfills and incinerators over the life of the WMRA contract. The contract also ensures that both dual-stream and single-stream municipalities will receive a revenue share from the sale of recyclable materials, and each community is guaranteed a zero-dollar tipping fee at the facility.

During 2011, the 77 MRF communities recycled more than 31,000 tons of plastic, paper, metals and glass, with the communities receiving more than $1.4 million in payments for the recyclables delivered. Also last year, the estimated avoided-disposal cost savings for the MRF municipalities by recycling was approximately $2 million.

SPRINGFIELD MRF: MassDEP recently celebrated the installation of solar panels on the roof of the Springfield Materials Recycling Facility. Shown (l-r) are: Department of Energy Resources Commissioner Mark Sylvia; Springfield MRF Advisory Board Chairman Eric Weiss holding a solar panel sample; MassDEP Commissioner Ken Kimmell; DCAM Acting Deputy Commissioner Hope Davis; and Waste Management Recycle America Area Director Terry Bennett.

Since the Springfield MRF began operation, the facility has processed nearly two billion pounds of recyclables, and during that time, the member communities have received approximately $11.5 million in revenue sharing.

For more information on the Springfield MRF, go to: http://springfieldmrf.org/index.php.

News Briefs & Updates

Draft Regulations Coming Soon for Regulatory Reform Initiative

In the spring of 2011, MassDEP kicked off a major Regulatory Reform Initiative designed to maintain the agency's current high standards of environmental protection with the present level of staff - which has been reduced by more than 30 percent during the last decade. MassDEP's Regulatory Reform Initiative also was a mechanism for reviewing existing regulations to identify efficiency improvements as required of all state agencies under the Economic Development Reorganization Act of 2010. We developed a range of regulatory reform ideas with input from environmental advocates, business leaders, and municipal officials, and released a draft action plan for broad public comment over this past winter.

After considering public comments received, MassDEP issued its final Regulatory Reform Action Plan in March 2012. The agency has worked closely with its external advisory committees and other stakeholder groups to flesh out each of the reforms in detail. Now the agency is preparing draft changes to regulations to implement the reforms.

The draft regulations under the Regulatory Reform Initiative will be released in waves over the coming months. MassDEP is eager to have robust public review and comment

on these proposed regulatory changes. Notice of availability of draft regulations for public review will be made through the normal channels and also via the agency's free e-mail service for Regulation Updates and Related Notifications.

More information on MassDEP's Regulatory Reform Initiative and the Final Regulatory Reform Action Plan is available at: http://www.mass.gov/dep/about/priorities/regreform.htm.

You can sign up to receive notice of draft regulations out for public comment at: http://www.mass.gov/dep/public/reglist.htm.

State, Federal Environmental Officials Issue Update on Housatonic River Cleanup Options

Massachusetts environmental officials, including MassDEP and the Department of Fish and Game, recently hosted two public information sessions along with U.S. EPA Region 1 and Connecticut officials to update the public on the cleanup in the "rest-of-the-river" segment of the Housatonic River. The meetings were held in Lenox and Connecticut, and the agencies were able to report that EPA and the states of Massachusetts and Connecticut have come a long way in bridging the differences in approach to the cleanup of PCB contamination in the Housatonic River.

A portion of the Housatonic River.

EPA and the states have been in discussions in recent months to reach the best cleanup solution for the PCBs contained in the river banks, floodplains, and in the waters that flow south from Pittsfield through Connecticut and into Long Island Sound. Those discussions continue. However, a 10-page updated report outlining some of the proposed cleanup options was issued during the recent public meetings, and the report is available at this link: http://www.epa.gov/region1/ge/thesite/restofriver/reports/508662.pdf.

The Housatonic River is contaminated with PCBs and other hazardous substances released from the General Electric Co. facility in Pittsfield over many decades. Over the past 10 years, EPA and GE have cleaned up a portion of the river adjacent to the GE facility. Now the agencies, the public and river stakeholders, and officials from communities along the river are seeking to finalize cleanup plans that will remove PCBs from the river areas, while ensuring that nearby wetlands, floodplains and river resources are not seriously damaged in the process. Once the agency discussions are finalized, EPA will issue a proposed cleanup

plan for the river, and that plan will be open for public comment before the plan is implemented.

MassDEP Tornado Response Team Honored with Carballo Award for Public Service Excellence

A little more than one year ago, on June 1, 2011, Massachusetts experienced nature's deadly force, as the first in a string of three tornados touched down in Westfield. As these storms moved eastward, they left behind a destructive path that stretched 39 miles across 10 communities.

In the wake of these storms - most notably an F3 tornado - the toll was profound: three dead, more than 200 people injured, and more than 1,500 homes destroyed or severely damaged. In addition, electrical power was knocked out to more than 50,000 customers, thousands of trees were leveled and more than $100 million in damage was left to the infrastructure and environment of these communities.

Twenty-two staffers from MassDEP's Western Regional Office in Springfield, with help from a staffer each from the Central and Northeast regional offices, immediately jumped into action with a plan to assess the environmental damage and help local officials and residents address that damage. MassDEP and other first-responders helped with vital recovery efforts in helping the victims of this terrible storm to get their lives back to normal as quickly as possible.

One of MassDEP's emergency response vehicles on the scene of the June 1, 2011 tornado.

MassDEP set up an Emergency Operations Center in their Springfield office, and established a unique Point-of-Contact (POC) program for each of the affected communities in order to provide direct technical assistance to local officials and residents.

For all of the great work accomplished in the wake of the tornadoes, the MassDEP Tornado Response Team was nominated for and this month will receive the Manual Carballo Governor's Award for Excellence in Public Service. Here is a link to the award announcement: http://www.mass.gov/anf/employment-equal-access-disability/employee-prog-and-training/performance-recog-prog/2011-prog-and-award-winners/carballo-award/massdep-tornado-team.html.

The Manuel Carballo Governor's Award for Excellence in Public Service is the Commonwealth's highest honor for Executive Department employees. The award recognizes and honors state employees who personify excellence in public service. A special Selection Committee reviews nominations

received from state agencies and makes recommendations to the Governor. The committee is comprised of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President of the Senate, and various appointees chosen by the Governor from business, labor, academia, media and community groups.

As Secretary of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Manuel Carballo oversaw 14 state agencies. His dedication and commitment to the physically and mentally challenged, older citizens and children, families in crisis and the less fortunate is remembered through these annual awards.

Tornado Response Team Accepting the Manuel Carballo Award: From left - Governor Deval Patrick, Eva Tor, Catherine Skiba, Catherine Wanat, David Slowick, Kellie Niemiec, David Howland, Secretary Jay Gonzalez, Secretary Richard Sullivan, Commissioner Ken Kimmell, John Ziegler, Brian Harrington, Michael McGrath, Brian Bordeaux, John Bourcier, Daniel Kurpaska, Anthony Kurpaska, Dino Dellechiaie. Not pictured: Daniel Laprade, Douglas Paine, Joanne Flescher, Joel Rees, John Fitzgerald, Paul Nietupski, Peter Czapienski, Richard Larson, Robert Shultz, Stacey Dakai

The members of MassDEP's Tornado Response team are: Eva Tor, Dave Howland, Brian Harrington, Dave Slowick, Stacey Dakai, Joel Rees, John Bourcier, Joanne Flescher, Tony Kurpaska, John Ziegler, Dan Laprade, Mike McGrath, Paul Nietupski, Dan Kurpaska, Doug Paine, Catherine Skiba, Brian Bordeaux, Bob Shultz, Peter Czapienski, Rick Larson, Cathy Wanat, Kellie Niemiec, John Fitzgerald (NERO) and Dino DelleChiaie (CERO).

Tornados and storms can be terrifying and devastating, and weather disasters like this will always be an unfortunate and seemingly-random part of life. MassDEP recognizes there is a need for the Commonwealth to prepare and to plan for the worst that can happen. MassDEP remains committed to being part of the emergency response infrastructure in Massachusetts, and having an effective emergency response team at MassDEP is an integral and essential part of the mission to protect the environment and the public health.

New Guide Available for Developing Solar on Closed Landfills; Another Solar at Landfills Workshop Slated for July 26, 2012

The Clean Energy Results Program (CERP), a joint initiative of MassDEP and the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER), harnesses the expertise of both agencies to advance




the development of renewable energy and energy efficiency projects. One goal of CERP is to achieve 50 megawatts of new solar photovoltaic energy generation by 2020 on environmentally challenged land (closed and capped landfills and Brownfields). Achieving this goal will help reduce air pollution associated with electricity production from fossil fuels, while also cutting energy costs, creating green jobs, and generating tax revenue for Massachusetts communities.

Generating solar power on closed municipal landfills makes both environmental and economic sense. There has never been a more opportune time for municipalities to develop solar PV systems on landfills. Although not every closed landfill is suitable to host a solar PV system, municipal landfills with advantageous site characteristics may provide an opportunity for cities and towns to generate revenue from otherwise undevelopable land.

MassDEP and DOER have been working hard to provide cities and towns with the tools they need to explore whether their closed landfills are well-suited for solar arrays and wind turbines. The agencies held two workshops for communities and solar developers in June 2009 and January 2010. Now, with help from MassDEP and other agencies, DOER has just released the "Guide to Developing Solar Photovoltaics at Massachusetts Landfills." This guidebook will help municipal officials identify, evaluate, and pursue opportunities to harness the sun's power to generate electricity and revenue from undeveloped space over closed, capped landfills. Topics covered include: physical requirements of photovoltaic (PV) systems; PV system economics; landfill considerations; public procurement; and PV system development, design, and installation. The complete guide can be found on DOER's web site at: http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/doer/green-communities/pubs-reports/pvlandfillguide.pdf.

Across the Commonwealth, there are more than 400 inactive or closed landfills. To date, more than 20 of these closed landfills have received "post-closure use" permit approvals from MassDEP for solar PV, and one closed landfill has been approved for a wind turbine. If each of these projects advances to completion, they will total more than 48 megawatts toward the CERP 50 megawatt installation goal.

To supplement the new Guide, MassDEP and DOER, with support from the Environmental Business Council of New England, are presenting another "Renewable Energy at Closed Landfills" workshop in July 2012. At this event, experts will provide municipalities with the tools needed to assess the redevelopment potential of closed landfill sites, navigate the permitting process, and harness state renewable-energy incentives. The workshop agenda will highlight successful renewable-energy installations on closed municipal landfills, including the first Massachusetts solar-on-landfill project to begin operation - a 2.3-megawatt solar array in Easthampton. The workshop will take place on Thursday, July 26, 2012 at the Boxborough Holiday Inn. For details on the upcoming workshop and for more information about developing

renewable energy on closed landfills, please visit MassDEP's web site at: http://www.mass.gov/dep/energy/landfill.htm.

MassDEP Contemplates Improvements to Requirements under the Public Waterfront Act, 'Chapter 91'

The Commonwealth's primary tool for protection and promotion of public use of its tidelands and other waterways is the waterways licensing program under the Massachusetts Public Waterfront Act (Mass. General Laws Chapter 91). Through "Chapter 91," the Commonwealth guarantees that private uses of tidelands and waterways serve a proper public purpose. Specifically, the MassDEP Waterways Regulation Program preserves pedestrian access to and along the water's edge for fishing, fowling and navigation and, in return for permission to develop non-water-dependent projects on filled private and Commonwealth tidelands, to provide publicly-accessible ground-floor facilities to enhance public use and enjoyment of the water. Other objectives of the program include: protection of public strolling and public navigation rights; promotion and protection of tidelands as a workplace for commercial fishing, shipping, passenger transportation and other water-dependent activities; and protection of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern and other ecologically sensitive areas from unnecessary encroachment by fill and structures.

MassDEP is now reviewing the policy covering Facilities of Public Accommodation under Chapter 91 for buildings built over state tidelands.

In February 2012, MassDEP Commissioner Ken Kimmell convened a stakeholder group to examine the agency's "facilities of public accommodation" (FPA) rules under Chapter 91. FPAs under Ch.91 require that when constructing non-water-dependent buildings, no less than 75 percent of the ground floor must accommodate the transient public in order to draw people to the waterfront. This can be in the form of retail stores, restaurants, community space, and public restrooms.

While FPAs have been successful in most instances, according to the development community, in certain cases they may result in under-utilized ground-floor space, which represents a lost opportunity for the public and landowners. The purpose of the Commissioner's FPA group is to assess the results of the current rules and to provide recommendations to the agency on modifications that will better activate the waterfront and encourage its use and enjoyment by the public.

Based on the thoughtful input from this stakeholder group, MassDEP staff will craft a set of potential changes to the FPA requirements under Ch. 91. The agency hopes that proposed changes will go out for public review and comment in the fall of 2012, and be finalized by the end of the calendar year. Public notice about these draft changes will be posted on MassDEP's website and will also be distributed to interested parties via the agency's "List-Serve" for regulations and related updates. Sign up for notifications at: http://www.mass.gov/dep/public/reglist.htm.

$418M in SRF Funding to Support 90 Drinking Water, Wastewater Projects

Life here in the Bay State requires a substantial infrastructure to protect, treat and distribute drinking water, and to remove wastewater so that it can be treated and safely discharged. Doing this requires treatment plants, large and small, that all told provide a network that is quite extensive, and expensive, to maintain. To assist communities with the costs of fixing or replacing these big-ticket projects, the Patrick-Murray Administration announced in May that nearly $418 million in loans were awarded to help fund a total of 90 such projects across the Commonwealth.

These recipients are now eligible to receive low-interest (2%) loans to fund construction and planning projects that are designed to improve water quality, upgrade or replace aging wastewater infrastructure, and cut energy use and costs.

The Commonwealth is offering these loans under the State Revolving Fund (SRF) to assist financing for communities throughout the state to fund necessary projects that cities and towns, regional water supply and wastewater treatment districts, and the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) submitted for consideration.

The Lowell Wastewater Treatment Facility, as seen from the air, has received SRF funding from this latest round.

These projects include 55 clean-water initiatives totaling more than $303 million and 35 drinking water projects totaling nearly $115 million. Communities offered SRF funding in this round must decide to move forward with the project by June 30 and secure local funding authority.

In accordance with MassDEP's Clean Energy Results Program, 38 of the 90 projects, or $124 million of the total $418 million, are for green infrastructure projects or green components of projects. Those projects

would involve energy efficiency upgrades to treatment plants and the on-site installation of renewable energy technologies for solar and wind power.

Energy use at wastewater and drinking water facilities is a major contributor to overall energy consumption for many cities and towns, with communities statewide spending approximately $150 million per year on electricity to treat 662 billion gallons of wastewater and drinking water. Approximately 30 percent of municipal energy use derives from water treatment.

This funding round also provides $6.44 million in loan principle forgiveness on $220 million in loans for 36 construction and planning projects in 25 municipalities, which are considered Environmental Justice (EJ) communities with below average Median Household Income levels.

The SRF is comprised of two programs: the Clean Water Fund, which has awarded approximately $4.8 billion in loans since the program's inception in 1991; and the Drinking Water Fund, which has awarded approximately $1.2 billion in projects since it began in 1999.

This year, the Clean Water SRF funds 14 planning and 41 construction projects, such as wastewater treatment facilities and upgrades to existing sewer systems. The Drinking Water SRF funds one planning and 34 construction projects; these funds support the engineering, design and construction of drinking water facilities and systems that protect public health and strengthen compliance with drinking water requirements, while addressing the Commonwealth's drinking water needs.

To see the full listing, click on the following links for either Clean Water or Drinking Water projects.

Clean Water SRF projects for 2012, go to Table No. 1 at:
http://www.mass.gov/dep/water/wastewater/cwsrf.htm.

Drinking Water SRF projects for 2012, go to Table No. 1 at:
http://www.mass.gov/dep/water/wastewater/dwsrf.htm.

Reducing Water Pollution from Lawn Fertilizing: Northeast States Kickoff Voluntary Initiative

In the fall of 2011, MassDEP Commissioner Ken Kimmell, along with the environmental agency commissioners from the other five New England states and New York, agreed to pursue a voluntary regional initiative to reduce nutrient pollution to water bodies from the use of lawn fertilizers. The states have called upon the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission (NEIWPCC) to help facilitate this endeavor. This Northeast States Voluntary Turf Fertilizer Initiative was formally launched into action in late May 2012 as these state partners, with strong support from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, began a series of issue-specific meetings with various stakeholders.

The goal is to jointly develop voluntary guidelines for reducing nutrient pollution to water bodies from lawn fertilizing, and have broad stakeholder buy-in on these guidelines by early 2013.

U.S. EPA estimates that roughly half of the nation's water bodies suffer from some level of water pollution caused by excessive amounts of the nutrients nitrogen and phosphorus. The Charles River is a high-profile example of a water body that is highly impacted by nutrient pollution, and countless local ponds, lakes, streams and bays throughout the Northeast face similar nutrient problems. In the majority of cases, polluted runoff is the primary source of nutrients to our waters. When it rains and when snow melts, the rain or snowmelt picks up pollutants as it travels across developed land. Eventually, this runoff will enter a storm drain, which empties into a local water body. When homeowners or professional landscapers apply too much fertilizer on lawns, and when they apply fertilizer while the ground is frozen or right before a heavy rain storm, nutrients in the fertilizer are carried off to the nearest body of water. There, nutrients over-feed algae, contributing to problematic algae blooms and declining aquatic health.

The Northeast Voluntary Turf Fertilizer Initiative aims to reduce nutrient pollution that causes excessive algae in streams.

The first stakeholder meetings in late May 2012 focused on manufacturers of synthetic and organic turf fertilizers. Subsequent sessions, targeted for early fall 2012, will include professional landscapers, retailers, watershed associations, and others. The northeastern state commissioners hope to have voluntary agreements between the stakeholders and the agencies that will address fertilizer formulations, labeling, and consumer education regarding application guidelines in place near the end of calendar 2012.

For more information about the Northeast States Voluntary Turf Fertilizer Initiative, please visit the NEIWPCC web site at: http://www.neiwpcc.org/turffertilizer/meetings.asp. For more information about water pollution coming from run-off and what we can all do to prevent it, please visit MassDEP's web site at: http://www.mass.gov/dep/water/resources/nonpoint.htm.

MassDEP Fetes Top Achievers Among State's Many Notable Public Water Systems

As part of National Drinking Water Week in May, MassDEP announced a total of 29 winners of the annual Public Water Systems Awards, which are given each year to systems large and small across the Commonwealth. Since 1991, MassDEP has annually awarded citations to acknowledge the silent, hard-working, and mostly invisible accomplishments provided by those systems that help provide safe, reliable and clean drinking water to Bay State citizens every day.

"We rely on the protection, treatment and distribution of water by public water systems, and the constant attention to these tasks by these systems is worthy of special commendation," said MassDEP Commissioner Kenneth Kimmell. "These systems were chosen from 1,477 public water systems in Massachusetts, because their effort was particularly noteworthy."

MassDEP Commissioner Ken Kimmell presents the Energy Conservation and Water Conservation awards to the Chelmsford Water District, represented by (left to right) Ronald W. Wetmore, Chairman, Board of Water Commissioners, Todd Melanson, Environmental Compliance Manager, and Robert J. Delaney, Superintendent, during Drinking Water Day ceremonies at the Waterworks Museum in Chestnut Hill.

For more information on the Drinking Water Awards, go to: http://www.mass.gov/dep/public/press/0512wsad.htm.

This year also marks the 38th Anniversary of the Safe Drinking Water Act that forms the core of the nation's efforts to provide quality drinking water and protect the public health. MassDEP works with drinking water utilities to make sure that the water delivered to consumers meets all federal and state standards and is clean and abundant. These efforts are vital to the Massachusetts economy and to the public health of our citizens.

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